

§1003(g) SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT GUIDELINES AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001



Issued by:
Indiana Department of Education
Division of Title I

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*Submit application electronically to jmiller@doe.in.gov
no later than February 29, 2008*

GUIDELINES

PURPOSE OF GRANT

Improving schools is a joint responsibility for schools, local educational agencies (LEAs) and State educational agencies (SEAs). Section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the School Improvement Fund, authorizes funds to help SEAs and LEAs address the needs of schools in improvement, corrective action, and restructuring in order to improve student achievement. In conjunction with funds reserved under section 1003(a), School Improvement Funds are to be used to leverage change and improve technical assistance under sections 1116 and 1117 of Title I, Part A through SEAs' and LEAs' targeting activities toward measurable outcomes as described in this document. Expected results from the use of these funds include improving student proficiency, increasing the number of schools that make adequate yearly progress, and using data to inform decisions and create a system of continuous feedback and improvement.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be eligible for section 1003(g) school improvement funds, a district must have one or more Title I served schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

Funds are available for *schools* identified for improvement. The statute specifies that 95 percent of these funds must be suballocated to local school corporations to assist *schools* in need of improvement or involved in corrective action or restructuring.

BUDGET and ACCOUNTING

Like other Title I monies, the Title I §1003(g) *School Improvement Grant* award must be used to supplement the level of funds that, in the absence of the Title I monies, would be made available from non-federal sources for the education of children participating in Title I programs. Therefore, **funds cannot supplant non-federal funds or be used to replace existing services.**

Improvement funds *must be tracked separately* from the Title I Basic Grant and the section 1003(a) Title I School Improvement Grant. Local fiscal agents are to place improvement funds in a Title I account assigned for school improvement (this funding number must not be the same number as is used for the Title I Basic Grant award or 1003(a) School Improvement Grant). Because these are school improvement funds, districts may not combine funds into one account, and the amount awarded each school must be spent on improvement initiatives at that school.

Each school should complete an individual School Improvement Grant Budget. Schools receiving awards will then complete a Cash Request.

The CFDA (Code of Federal Domestic Assistance) Number for this grant is #84.377A.

DURATION

The project period for FY 2007 funds ends on September 30, 2009. This means that all work described in the grant application for the first year of funding must be completed by that date.

Subject to future appropriations by Congress, an SEA may renew an LEA's grant of section 1003(g) funds for two additional one-year periods if schools in the LEA are meeting the goals in their school improvement plans developed under section 1116.

ACCESSING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION:

- ❑ Go to: <http://www.doe.state.in.us/TitleI/welcome.html>, then go to "Applications and Amendments" and click on *Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant Application*.
- ❑ **Save** the document to your own computer and close the website.
- ❑ Open the saved document, complete the application and attach it in an email to jmiller@doe.in.gov.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How may grant funds be used?

The SEA, in consultation with the Title I Committee of Practitioners, and as approved by the U.S. Department of Education, has decided to make items a -d allowable in the section 1003(g) application for funds. Each LEA will select the strategy or strategies it determines will be the most effective, based on data that reflect their individual circumstances, LEA and school capacity to improve student achievement and move schools out of improvement.

- a. Provide customized technical assistance and/or professional development that is designed to build the capacity of LEA and school staff to improve schools and is informed by student achievement and other outcome-related measures. The Title I Committee of Practitioners and the SEA agreed to select this strategy on the basis that schools in improvement need individualized assistance to best meet the needs of each school and to sustain capacity-building at the local level. Individual needs will be determined and assistance may include data analysis as related to problems with classroom instruction, professional development, and parental involvement; identification and implementation of high-quality strategies supported in the school improvement plan; and analysis of budgets and resources to augment reform efforts.
- b. Utilize research based strategies or practices to change instructional practice to address the academic achievement problems that caused the school to be identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring. This strategy was selected because of the responsibility LEAs bear for assisting schools in improvement. The July, 2006 LEA and School Improvement Non-Regulatory Guidance, D-2 states:

The LEA must help the school choose effective instructional strategies and methods and ensure that the school staff receives high-quality professional development relevant to their implementation. The chosen strategies must be grounded in scientifically based research and address the specific instructional issues that caused the school to be identified for improvement.

Source: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolimprovementguid.doc>

- c. Create partnerships among the SEA, LEAs and other entities for the purpose of delivering technical assistance, professional development, and management advice. The SEA and Committee of Practitioners elected this strategy to support and enhance items #a and #b. The SEA, LEAs, and other entities would benefit from a collaborative effort of consultation and service delivery.
- d. Implement other strategies determined by the LEA, and approved by the SEA as appropriate, for which data indicate the strategy is likely to result in improved teaching and learning in schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. This strategy remains in the proposed 1003(g) application for funds on the grounds that districts should have the flexibility to propose additional strategies specific to a unique need or to address areas not directly covered in items #a-c. The SEA retains approval authority.

LEAs receiving approval for section 1003(g) funds must use these funds to strengthen and leverage the improvement strategies outlined in the Part A Basic Grant and the 1003(a) Grant.

2. How will funds be awarded?

After consultation with the Title I Committee of Practitioners, the SEA will allow LEAs to access section 1003(g) funds through a **competitive grant process**. This process will include an expert panel of reviewers and specific criteria for selection. Title I will award funds to LEAs with the greatest need for improvement that can demonstrate evidence of successful implementation. The LEAs will be required to present a well-documented plan for meeting specific educational needs in their local schools to demonstrate their commitment for successful implementation. Section 1003(a) and section 1003(g) funds will be allocated separately due to differing time frames of access to funds, but both funding sources must show programmatic coordination. Grant award amounts to LEAs will ensure that each grant is of sufficient size and scope to support the activities required under sections 1116 and 1117, and will award not less than \$50,000.00 or more than \$500,000.00 per school.

3. When will grant funds be available?

First distributions will be made in April.

4. Are these funds renewable?

Yes. Subject to future appropriations by Congress, an SEA may renew an LEA's grant of section 1003(g) funds for two additional one-year periods if schools in the LEA are meeting the goals in their school improvement plans developed under section 1116.

5. If an LEA has multiple schools in improvement, may more than one school apply for funds?

Yes. As part of the application process, LEAs must describe the procedure the district used to select the school(s) to apply for funds, explain the rationale for an eligible school's inclusion in this application, and describe the school(s) capacity and commitment to long term improvement efforts.

6. Who will conduct the required outside evaluation?

The SEA will identify and select the outside evaluator. Schools approved for funding will be notified and given further direction regarding data collection.

7. How will the outside evaluation be funded?

The SEA will provide the additional funding to LEA's with schools receiving §1003(g) awards. It will be the LEA's requirement to contract with the approved outside evaluator, using the funds provided by the SEA.

8. What is the deadline to apply?

Applications must be submitted via email to jmiller@doe.in.gov no later than February 29, 2008.

9. Who do I contact if I have questions?

Questions should be directed to the Title I office at 317-232-0540 or Toll-Free at 877-418-7240.

Districts should also reference USDE's non-regulatory guidance: *LEA and School Improvement Non-Regulatory Guidance* (July 21, 2006) for additional information relative to improvement requirements. It is available at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolimprovementguid.doc>.

**ALL §1003(g) SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED
NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 29, 2008.**